

## REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1-3.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 because it is unclear how the water is activated by merely contacting it with a hydrogen absorbing alloy, since the hydrogen absorbing alloy would remove the hydrogen and no step of adding hydrogen to the water to activate the water is disclosed.

This is no longer the case in view of the above amendment, which amendment is supported, for example, on page 5 of the present specification.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reznik (U.S. 5,951,839) in view of Japanese Patent 09-001153 to Kawasaki.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The rejection contends that Reznik discloses the claimed method while recognizing that the reference does not disclose the use of palladium as the source of hydrogen. The rejection further takes the position that this deficiency of Reznik can be remedied by the disclosure of JP '153, in which palladium is taught as the source of hydrogen.

The palladium in JP '153, however, is used as a water-insoluble electroconductive material of an electrode for electrolytic activation of hydrogen with electric and/or vibrational energy. There is no step of effecting impregnation of a hydrogen-absorbing alloy with hydrogen prior to contacting the hydrogen-bearing alloy with water.

Accordingly, the claimed method is unobvious over Reznik and the JP reference, either alone or combined.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

Kei USUI

By: Matthew M. Jacob  
Matthew M. Jacob  
Registration No. 25,154  
Attorney for Applicants

MJ/da  
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021  
Telephone (202) 721-8200  
Facsimile (202) 721-8250  
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